

Message Text

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DRAFTED BY EA/TB - JJHELBLE:MFG

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S/S - MR. SEBASTIAN

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 305293

EXDIS/EYES ONLY/FOR THE AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, ACOM

SUBJECT: COMPROMISE OF EMBASSY BANGKOK TELEGRAMS

1. ON DECEMBER 14 WASHINGTON POST CORRESPONDENT DON OBERDORFER, CALLED ON EA/TB DIRECTOR TO SEEK COMMENTS ON SEVERAL PASSAGES OF EMBASSY BANGKOK TELEGRAMS WHICH OBERDORFER HAD IN HIS POSSESSION. OBERDORFER STATED THE MESSAGES HAD BEEN SENT TO THE POST, AND CLAIMED HE WAS UNAWARE OF THE SOURCE.

2. FROM THE PASSAGES OBERDORFER READ, WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO DETERMINE THAT HE HAD, AT THE MINIMUM, THE TEXTS OF BANGKOK 28495 (YOUR CONVERSATION WITH THANAT KHOMAN) BANGKOK 28768 (CAPTAIN GRAHAM'S OCTOBER 16 TALK WITH ADMIRAL SA-NGAT), AND BANGKOK 30742 (YOUR NOVEMBER 8 CON-
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VERSATION WITH UPADIT). OBERDORFER'S QUESTIONS WERE BASED ON PARAGRAPH 8 OF BANGKOK 28495, PARAGRAPH 2(D) OF BANGKOK 29769, AND PARAGRAPH 2 OF BANGKOK 30742.

3. ON THE FOLLOWING DAY, DIRECTOR OF EA/TB CONTACTED OBERDORFER AND, INTER ALIA, EXPRESSED DEEP CONCERN THAT

OBERDORFER NOT EMPLOY THE MATERIAL AVAILABLE TO HIM IN SUCH A MANNER AS MIGHT COMPROMISE THE CONFIDENTIALITY OF

THE DISCUSSIONS MEMBERS OF THE MISSION HAD HAD WITH THAI OFFICIALS. IT WAS POINTED OUT THAT INDISCREET USE OF THE MATERIAL COULD SERIOUSLY JEOPARDIZE THE CAPABILITY OF THE MISSION TO PERFORM ITS FUNCTIONS, IN PARTICULAR DAMAGE YOUR ABILITY TO ENGAGE THAI OFFICIALS IN SUBSTANTIVE DISCUSSIONS. OBERDORFER EXPRESSED UNDERSTANDING OF THIS CONCERN, STATED IT WAS NOT HIS INTENTION TO DISRUPT U.S.-THAI RELATIONS, BUT NOTED HIS JOURNALISTIC RESPONSIBILITIES AND COULD MAKE NO COMMITMENT TO AVOID CITING ONE OR MORE OF THESE CONVERSATIONS. HE STATED HE HAD NOT DECIDED WHAT USE HE SHOULD MAKE OF THE MATERIALS, BUT THOUGHT HE WOULD PROBABLY WRITE A GENERAL PIECE ON U.S.-THAI RELATIONS. EA/TB DIRECTOR REITERATED HIS CONCERNS, BUT AGAIN COULD ELICIT NO COMMITMENT FROM OBERDORFER TO AVOID USE OF THE MATERIAL WHICH COULD BE DAMAGING. SY HAS BEEN INFORMED.

4. IN THE EVENT THAT OBERDORFER UTILIZES THE MATERIAL FOR A STORY, WE WILL PROVIDE YOU WITH DEPARTMENT PRESS GUIDANCE ON AN IMMEDIATE BASIS.
ROBINSON

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